Army Instructed Latins On Executions, Torture

Manuals Used 1982-91, Pentagon Reveals

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U.S. Army intelligence manuals used to train Latin American military officers at an Army school from 1982 to 1991 advocated executions, torture, blackmail and other forms of coercion against insurgents, Pentagon documents released yesterday show.

Used in courses at the U.S. Army's School of the Americas, the manual says that to recruit and control informants, counterintelligence agents could use "fear, payment of bounties for enemy dead, beatings, false imprisonment, executions and the use of truth serum," according to a secret Defense Department summary of the manuals compiled during a 1992 investigation of the instructional material and also released yesterday.

A summary of the investigation and four pages of brief, translated excerpts from the seven Spanish-language manuals were released last night by the Defense Department, which recently has taken to making controversial information available in the evenings, after the deadlines of the prime-time network television news programs.

The Army School of the Americas, long located in Panama but moved in 1984 to Fort Benning, Ga., has trained nearly 60,000 military and police officers from Latin America and the United States since 1946.

Its graduates have included some of the region's most notorious human rights abusers, among them Roberto D'Aubuisson, the leader of El Salvador's right-wing death squads; 19 Salvadoran soldiers linked to the 1989 assassination of six Jesuit priests; Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega, the deposed Panamanian strongman; six Peruvian officers linked to killings of students and a professor; and Col. Julio Roberto Alpirez, a Guatemalan officer implicated in the death of an American innkeeper living in Guatemala and to the death of a leftist guerrilla married to an American lawyer.

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Executions, Torture as Coercion

MANUAL, From A1

The Defense Department said the school's curriculum now includes mandatory human rights training and it is an effective way to help promote military professionalism in a region where that concept is still nascent.

"The problem was discovered in 1992, properly reported and fixed," said Lt. Col. Arne Owens, a Pentagon spokesman. "There have been a lot of great changes at the School of the Americas."

When reports of the 1992 investigation surfaced this year during a congressional inquiry into the CIA's activities in Guatemala, spokesmen for the school denied the manuals advocated such extreme methods of operation, which were in violation of Army policy and law at the time they were in use.

The 1992 investigation concluded the inclusion of the methods was the result of bureaucratic oversight. "It is incredible that the use . . . since 1982 . . . evaded the established system of doctrinal controls," said the report of the investigation, conducted by the office of the assistant to the secretary of defense for intelligence oversight. "Nevertheless, we could find no evidence that this was a deliberate and orchestrated attempt to violate DoD or Army policies."

The manuals were complied by Army intelligence officials using "outdated instructional material without the required doctrinal approval" from the Army Intelligence School, the investigation report said.

The material was based, in part, on training instructions used in the 1960s by the Army's Foreign Intelligence Assistance Program, entitled "Project X." The 1992 investigation also found the manual was distributed to thousands of military officers from 11 South and Central American countries, including Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Panama, where the U.S. military was heavily involved in counterinsurgency.

One manual, entitled "Handling of Sources," also "discloses classified [informant] methodology that could compromise Army clandestine intelligence modus operandi," the 1992 investigation found. Another manual, entitled "Counterintelligence," contained "sensitive Army counterintelligence tactics.

The Defense Department yesterday said the 1992 investigators found two dozen objectionable passages among the 1,169 pages of instruction. For instance, the manual entitled "Handling of Sources" says, "The CI [counterintelligence] agent could cause the arrest of the employees [informants] parents, imprison the employee or give him a beating" to coerce cooperation.

On several occasions it uses the words "neutralization" or "neutralizing," which was commonly used at the time as a euphemism for execution or destruction, a Pentagon official said.

A 1992 investigation concluded the inclusion of the questioned methods was the result of bureaucratic oversight.

The manual on "Terrorism and the Urban Guerrilla" says that "another function of the CI agents is recommending CI targets for neutralizing. The CI targets can include personalities, installations, organizations, documents and materials . . . the personality targets prove to be valuable sources of intelligence. Some examples of these targets are governmental officials, political leaders, and members of the infrastructure."

The Defense Department continues to try to collect the manuals but, as the 1992 investigation noted, "due to incomplete records, retrieval of all copies is doubtful."

Rep. Joseph P. Kennedy II (D-Mass.), an advocate of closing the school, said in a statement last night that the manuals "show what we have suspected all along, that taxpayers' money has been used for physical abuse." Kennedy said, "The School of the Americas, a Cold War relic, should be shut